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ABSTRACT

This paper critically reviews the book, "My Heart Is On the Ground: The Diary of Nannie Little Rose, a Sioux Girl, Carlisle Indian School, 1800." The review begins with a profile of Captain Richard Henry Pratt who founded the Carlisle (Pennsylvania) Indian Industrial School in 1879. Pratt's philosophy was to "kill the Indian and save the man." Statements from former students describe life at the school as a horrific experience in which Indian children were forced to cut their hair, replace traditional clothing with military uniforms, and speak English. Children were also stripped of their Indian names, a source of cultural pride and identity. Despite all the documented horrors, the book casts the school in a positive light through the eyes of the main character, Nannie Little Rose. The review contends that from a literary perspective, the book lacks consistency and logic; as a work of historical fiction, it has many factual errors; and as a work of multicultural literature, it lacks authenticity. For example, throughout the book Nannie Little Rose uses the phrase "my heart is on the ground" whenever she is sad or upset. In its original form this statement conveys the strength and courage of Indian women, but in the context of the book, it trivializes the Indian belief system. Many other examples show how the book lacks historical accuracy and cultural authenticity and is replete with stereotypical language and treatment of girls and women. The review suggests that this book adds to the great body of misinformation about Native life and epitomizes the lack of sensitivity and respect that has come to characterize the vast majority of children's books about Native Americans. (LP)

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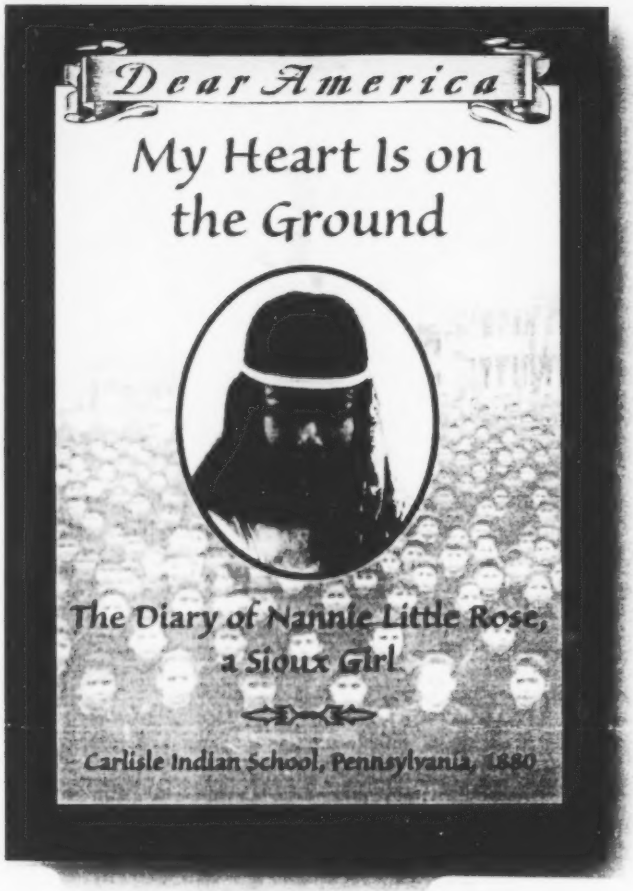
Dear America
My Heart Is on the Ground
The Diary of Nannie Little Rose, a Sioux Girl
Carlisle Indian School, Pennsylvania, 1880

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A Critical Review of Ann Rinaldi's

My Heart Is On the Ground
The Diary of Nannie Little Rose, a Sioux Girl
Carlisle Indian School, Pennsylvania, 1880

New York: Scholastic (1999)
205 pages, b/w photos
grades 4-7
ISBN 0-590-14922-9

This review can be found on Oyate's website
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INTRODUCTION

There is a story behind this review and how it came to be. In March, Debbie Reese (Nambé), a doctoral student at the University of Illinois, saw *My Heart Is On the Ground* in a local bookstore. She picked it up, skimmed it, and put it down in distaste. She walked away from it, took a few steps, and felt it couldn't be ignored. Reading through the book, she was outraged and called Beverly Slapin of Oyate in Berkeley and read excerpts to her. Beverly had already ordered a review copy from Scholastic and was not looking forward to reading it. A day later and equally outraged (or "stunned but not surprised" as she said), Beverly called it the "worst book she had ever read." Both women began talking about this book to colleagues.

Debbie contacted Barb Landis, a research specialist on the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Barb had also read the book and felt it was an outrageous depiction of a tragic period in Native American history. A series of internet and telephone discussions followed, and the circle came to include Marlene Atleo (Nuu-chah-nulth), Naomi Caldwell (Ramapough), Jean Mendoza, Deborah Miranda (Ohlone-Coastanoan Esselen), LaVera Rose (Lakota), and Cynthia Smith (Creek). We quickly drew up a first draft of what came to be this review, with each of us contributing particular areas of knowledge about Carlisle Indian School, Lakota culture and history, and critical evaluation of children's books; and, a few days later, Debbie raised the issues it contained at a children's literature conference at the University of Wisconsin in Madison.

As individuals, we write and speak in many voices, but we feel that our collective authorship of this piece adds to its strength. This piece represents a first-time collaboration among nine women. Some of us are Indian and some of us are not. Some of us are parents and grandparents and some of us are not. We all call ourselves teachers in some way; as well, we are learners. For purposes of practicality, we are listing our names alphabetically.

We do this for our children and grandchildren—Elizabeth, Carlos, Will, Michael, Michele, Stephanie, Miranda, Danny, Robert, Aimee, William, Thomas, Terri, Jamal, Kiana, Rose, Brittany, Shelena, Noah, Kevin, Tyson, Tara, Alexandria—and for their children and the next seven generations.

A BRIEF DIGRESSION ABOUT PRATT, CARLISLE, AND THE BOARDING SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Because Captain Richard Henry Pratt figures so prominently in this book, it might be a good thing to stop for a moment and look at who he was and what his relationship was to Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Born in 1840, Pratt began his military career by enlisting in the Union army in 1861. As a young cavalry officer, Pratt

commanded a regiment of Buffalo Soldiers. The Buffalo Soldiers were a Black regiment, that, along with hired Indian scouts, were used as mercenaries, Indian-fighters, for the benefit of white expansionism during the post-Civil War period. In 1875, Pratt was assigned the command of Fort Marion, the notorious prisoner-of-war camp in Saint Augustine, Florida, where Kiowa, Comanche, and Cheyenne prisoners were taken as hostages to ensure the subjugation of their people.

A decade later, Chiricahua Apache men, women, and children were also sent to Fort Marion, where the children were separated from their parents and sent on to Carlisle. It was at Fort Marion that Pratt began to formulate his early ideas about "civilizing" the Indians: he cut off their hair, replaced their traditional clothing with military uniforms, organized them into hierarchical-structured regiments, and taught them English. After enrolling several of the Fort Marion prisoners at the Hampton School for Negro Children in Virginia, Pratt recruited young children from the Standing Rock Agency and his ideas about Indian "education" began to take shape.

In 1879, Pratt founded the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, which he ruled with an iron hand, his stated philosophy being "Kill the Indian and save the man." Carlisle, and the Indian boarding schools which followed, were set up to break spirits, to destroy traditional extended families and cultures, to obliterate memories and languages, and especially to make the children deny their Indianness, inside and out.

Sun Elk, from Taos Pueblo, told of his experiences at Carlisle in 1890:

> *They told us that Indian ways were bad. They said we must get civilized. I remember that word, too. It means 'be like the white man.' I am willing to be like the white man, but I did not believe Indian ways were wrong. But they kept teaching us for seven years. And the books told how bad the Indians had been to the white men—burning their towns and killing their women and children. But I had seen white men do that to Indians. We all wore white man's clothes and ate white man's food and went to white man's churches and spoke white man's talk. And so after a while we also began to say Indians were bad. We laughed at our own people and their blankets and cooking pots and sacred societies and dances. I tried to learn the lessons—and after seven years I came home...* (Nabokov, 1991, p. 222).

During the period in which *My Heart Is On the Ground* takes place, Native people were confined to reservations and not allowed to leave without permission of the government-appointed Indian agent assigned to their reservations.

In *500 Nations* (1994), Alvin Josephy writes:

> *By the mid 1870s, reservations had become virtual prisons, ruled like empires by authoritarian agents who were given almost total power over the Indians. Shut inside the reservations, where outside eyes could not see them, the Indian peoples were subjected to unspeakable abuses. Housing monies were stolen, food rations were inadequate or spoiled, people were left to die without medical treatment or medicines, others were forcibly separated from their families to be punished without trial for real or trumped-up offenses, and individual Indians were frequently murdered.*
>
> *The Indians were at the mercy of a system of corrupt government officials and private suppliers and speculators, known collectively as the Indian Ring, who, taking advantage of public indiffer-*

ence, cheated the powerless tribes. Trapped on the reservations, without freedom and the ability to provide for themselves in time-tested fashion or make their complaints known, the Indian families lived in poverty and misery.

Many parents were coerced into sending their children to these early schools. Many times, children were kidnapped and sent far away to schools where they were kept for years on end. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Thomas Jefferson Morgan described his procedure for taking the children from their families. He said:

> *I would...use the Indian police if necessary. I would withhold from [the Indian adults] rations and supplies...and when every other means was exhausted...I would send a troop of United States soldiers, not to seize them, but simply to be present as an expression of the power of the government. Then I would say to these people, 'Put your children in school; and they would do it.'* (Josephy, 1994, p. 432)

Still, some parents found ways to avoid sending their children to the schools. In her autobiography, Helen Sekaquaptewa (Hopi) remembers that parents taught their children to play a game similar to hide-and-seek to avoid being taken away to boarding school. In *Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families 1900-1940*, Brenda J. Child (Ojibwe) reports:

> *The most painful story of resistance to assimilation programs and compulsory school attendance laws involved the Hopis in Arizona, who surrendered a group of men to the military rather than voluntarily relinquish their children. The Hopi men served time in federal prison at Alcatraz.* (p. 13)

Many children died at Carlisle, and they died running away from the institution. Child (1995), in her study of boarding schools, found that running away was a universal thread that ran across boarding schools and across generations. Physical and emotional abuse, including sexual abuse, is well documented in the stories of survivors of the boarding schools in the United States and Canada. Children were beaten and worse for not understanding English, for speaking their languages, for minor infractions of military rule, for running away, even for grieving. Many died of illnesses, many died of abuse, and many died of broken hearts.

It must be remembered also, that at this time, the Indian boarding schools were a cross-cultural experience for children who were taken from their parents and families, who were abruptly thrust into a foreign world, who were harshly punished for not knowing what was expected of them.

Lone Wolf (Blackfoot), tells this story:

> *It was very cold that day when we were loaded into the wagons. None of us wanted to go and our parents didn't want to let us go. Oh, we cried for this was the first time we were to be separated from our parents. I remember looking back at Na-tah-ki and she was crying too. Nobody waved as the wagons, escorted by the soldiers, took us toward the school at Fort Shaw. Once there our belongings were taken from us, even the little medicine bags our mothers had given to us to protect us from harm. Everything was placed in a heap and set afire.*
>
> *Next was the long hair, the pride of all the Indians. The boys, one by one, would break down and cry when they saw their braids thrown on the floor. All of the buckskin clothes had to go and we had to put on the clothes of the White Man.*

If we thought that the days were bad, the nights were much worse. This was the time when real loneliness set in, for it was when we knew that we were all alone. Many boys ran away from the school because the treatment was so bad but most of them were caught and brought back by the police. We were told never to talk Indian and if we were caught, we got a strapping with a leather belt.
I remember one evening when we were all lined up in a room and one of the boys said something in Indian to another boy. The man in charge of us pounced on the boy, caught him by the shirt, and threw him across the room. Later we found out that his collar-bone was broken. The boy's father, an old warrior, came to the school. He told the instructor that among his people, children were never punished by striking them. That was no way to teach children; kind words and good examples were much better. Then he added, 'Had I been there when that fellow hit my son, I would have killed him.' Before the instructor could stop the old warrior he took his boy and left. The family then beat it to Canada and never came back. (Nabokov, 1991, p. 220).

Part of the education students received at boarding schools included distorted instruction about who Indian people were. Chippewa student Merta Bercier wrote:

Did I want to be an Indian? After looking at the pictures of the Indians on the warpath—-fighting, scalping women and children, and Oh! such ugly faces. No! Indians are mean people—I'm glad I'm not an Indian, I thought. (Josephy, 1994. p. 434).

Many of those who survived Carlisle came out thoroughly brainwashed, and suffering from what we now call "post-traumatic stress syndrome."

"The point of brainwashing," Paula Gunn Allen (Laguna/Sioux) says,

is to take away all sense of self, of community, of value, of worth, even of orientation, to be replaced by habits of mind and behavior that the captor finds acceptable. The boys and girls at Carlisle Indian School were trained to be cannon fodder in American wars, to serve as domestics and farm hands, and to leave off all ideas or beliefs that came to them from their Native communities, including and particularly their belief that they were entitled to land, life, liberty, and dignity.

In a short time, the child comes to love and admire his captor,...a not uncommon adjustment made by those taken hostage; separated by all that is familiar; stripped, shorn, robbed of their very self; renamed.

By and large the procedure was successful, although the legacy of damaged minds and crippled souls it left in its wake is as yet untold. Psychic numbing, Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome, battered wife syndrome, suicide, alcoholism, ennui—are there any names for psychecide? A century after..., the great-great grandchildren of decultured Indians struggle to find the world that was ripped away...by a deliberate, planned method euphemistically called education. (Allen, 1994, pp. 111-112).

A BRIEF DIGRESSION ABOUT NAMING

When the administrators at Carlisle took the Indian children's names away, they knew what they were doing in the long, painstaking process of "killing the Indian." In taking away the linguistic Indian name—which had been a source of strength, cultural pride and psychic identity—and making the "new" names very common, written everywhere, used again and again, they in effect erased all spiritual aspects of the children's identities. Traditionally, Indian children did not have their names spoken often. When someone was referred to, it was usually either by relationship or by a nickname. But the children knew who they were: they belonged to the name, and the name belonged to them, and to no other. Naming and self-naming was a fluid, ongoing process which changed throughout a person's life according to circumstance, personal experience, loss, triumph, foolishness, or social commentary. So a person could have (at least) a birth name, a baby name, several nicknames, a child name, a "young adult" name, an adult name, and an elder name. In addition, there might be a "secret" or ceremonial name, known only by the individual and the holy person who gave that name.

Compare all this, if you will, to the act of "re-naming" at Carlisle, as related by Ota K'te, Plenty Kill, who became known as Luther Standing Bear:

> *One day when we came to school there was a lot of writing on the blackboards. We did not know what it meant.... None of the names were read or explained to us, so of course we did not know the sound or meaning of any of them.*
>
> *The teacher had a long pointed stick in her hand, and the interpreter told the boy in the front seat to come up. The teacher handed the stick to him, and the interpreter told him to pick out any name he wanted.... When the long stick was handed to him, he turned to us as much to say, 'Shall I—or will you help me—to take one of these names?' He did not know what to do for a time....*
>
> *Finally, he pointed out one of the names written on the blackboard. Then the teacher took a piece of white tape and wrote the name on it. Then she cut off a length of the tape and sewed it on the back of the boy's shirt. Then that name was erased from the board.... Soon we all had names of white men sewed on our backs.* (Standing Bear, 1928, in Allen, 1994, pp. 116-117)

Once the children's naming in this random way became enforced, they were denied the ability to express their life stories in name, an act of independent, autonomous identity central to Native ways of being in the world. It was a small, but important, step in "killing the Indian."

With this history in mind, let us now turn to the children's book, *My Heart Is On the Ground* by Ann Rinaldi.

ABOUT THE DEAR AMERICA SERIES AND *MY HEART IS ON THE GROUND*

The Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data summary of *My Heart Is On the Ground* states, "In the diary account of her life at a government-run Pennsylvania boarding school in 1880, a twelve-year-old Sioux Indian girl reveals a great need to find a way to help her people."

In this account, Nannie Little Rose, who refers to herself as "Sioux," describes her life at Carlisle Indian Industrial School, where she has been sent to be educated in the English language, and "American" customs and lifeways. Although determined to make her people proud, she finds this new world overwhelming—from its inside buildings and cumbersome dress, to the requirements that she take an English name, submit to having her hair cut, and adapt to a foreign culture. With the arrival of Nannie's friend, Lucy Pretty Eagle, the tenor of the story shifts. Lucy's propensity to lapse into self-induced trances causes her to be buried alive by the white people who mistakenly think she has died; and Nannie, who was not there to save her, suffers from not only grief but overwhelming guilt. But Nannie overcomes all of this, and adapt she does. Resolute in learning all she can in order to share her knowledge with her people, Nannie Little Rose meets every challenge and overcomes every obstacle, finally deciding to become a teacher "to help other blanket Indian children to learn."

All of the books in the "Dear America" series are identical in format. Each book begins with a title page, followed by "the diary." There is an epilogue, telling us what happened to the protagonist and her descendants afterwards. There is a Historical Note and a section of photographs, followed by a section called "About the Author," which gives a biographical sketch and then quotes directly from the author about her research. The fictional aspect is played down, with the dedication, acknowledgments, and CIP pages in the back.

The authors of the books are not identified on the book covers or on the spine. Each cover carries the "Dear America" logo, a small image of the protagonist, the book title, and a place/time note that indicates setting. Each book looks like a genuine diary. The books are attractive to look at and comfortable to hold. Special features include a sewn-in satin ribbon bookmark and cream-colored pages cut with a deckled edge that give them the look of quality diaries.

The portrait of the child on the cover of *My Heart Is On the Ground*, originally entitled "Cree Indian Girl, Little Star," is listed on the permissions page as "Indian Girl, Little Star." It was done by James Bama, a painter of romantic western and Indian subjects. The child in the portrait has her long hair parted and loose. She is wearing a headband, with two eagle feathers hanging straight down near her left temple. Her head is tilted forward, and her eyes are lowered. Behind her portrait is an underlay of an 1892 photograph of the Carlisle students, their hair cut short, in front of the school.

Discussions with child readers, teachers, and librarians reveal initial confusion about the fictive nature of this series. The epilogue, especially, continues to confound both professionals and young readers. Are these real diaries? Are these fictional diaries of real people? Are the epilogues, at least, real? Given the format of this series, it's hard to tell, unless one is an expert, a detective, or just naturally suspicious.

"Launched in September 1996, and with over 5 million books in print," according to Scholastic, "Dear America has become one of the most popular book series in America, charting regularly in the Top 5 on Publisher Weekly bestseller lists." The "Dear America" series clearly has mass appeal, and Scholastic aggressively markets these books to nine- to twelve-year-old girls. Marketing strategies and tie-ins include the "Dear America Desk Collection," a "new line of desk accessories for fans of the best-selling book series," and a series of six hour-long "Dear America" movies on HBO.

The "Dear America" website, also playing down the fact that this series is fiction, states:

> *Dear America invites you into the personal experience of girls from different times in American History. The books and television show are inspired by real letters and diaries from girls who*

> *lived in extraordinary circumstances. You will experience firsthand what it was like to grow up and live in another time and place.*

and

> *Open Their Diaries.... Make History Your Own! Today's most distinguished authors lend their voices and talents to these moving narratives—presented in an intimate diary format—with each book extensively researched and inspired by real letters and diaries of the time.*

My Heart Is On the Ground is described simply as, "A Sioux girl is sent to the Carlisle Indian School to help save her people."

The "Dear America" series continues to receive overwhelming critical acclaim. *The Chicago Tribune* notes that the "Dear America diaries represent the best of historical fiction for any age," and *School Library Journal* cites the books as "engaging and accessible."

Like the series, *My Heart Is On the Ground* has received extremely favorable reviews. *School Library Journal* says, "Rinaldi depicts widely divergent cultures with clarity and compassion.... The period, the setting, and Nannie herself all come to life. An excellent addition to a popular series."

And *Booklist* states,

> *The entries are a poignant mix of past and present—Nannie's life with her family, encounters with other students, the horrific death of a friend, the efforts of both well-meaning and misguided adults. They burst with details of about culture and custom, adding wonderful texture to this thought-provoking book, which raises numerous questions as it depicts the frustration, the joy, and the confusion of one of yesterday's children growing up in two cultures.*

THE REVIEW

> *There I found the Indian burial ground, with dozens of white headstones bearing the names of the Native American children from all tribes who died while at the school. The names, with the tribes inscribed underneath, were so lyrical that they leapt out at me and took on instant personalities. Although many of these children attended Carlisle at dates later than that of my story, I used some of their names for classmates of Nannie Little Rose.* (p. 195)

> *Like Lucy Pretty Eagle, not all the children in the book were at Carlisle that first year. But like Lucy Pretty Eagle, their personalities came through to me with such force and inspiration, I had to use them. I am sure that in whatever Happy Hunting Ground they now reside, they will forgive this artistic license, and even smile upon it.* (p. 196)

Individuals in the field of children's literature may dismiss our concerns and ask, "But is it a good book?" We think not. From a literary perspective, it lacks consistency and logic. As a work of historical fiction, it is rife with glaring factual errors. As a work of "multicultural" literature, it lacks authenticity.

Appropriation

Appropriation of our lives and literatures is nothing new. Our bodies and bones continue to be displayed in museums all over the U.S. and Canada. For the last hundred years, many of our traditional stories have been turned into books for children without permission and with little if any respect given to their origins or sacred content. Now, Rinaldi has taken this appropriation of Native lives and stories one step further. That she would take the names of real Native children from gravestones and make up experiences to go with them is the coldest kind of appropriation. These were children who died lonely and alone, without their parents to comfort them. They were buried without proper ceremony in this lonely and sad place. Native people who visit the cemetery today express a profound sense of sadness.

Rinaldi chose to name this book by appropriating a Cheyenne proverb that goes, "A nation is not conquered until the hearts of its women are on the ground. Then it is done, no matter how brave its warriors nor how strong their weapons." In its original form, this statement is about the strength and courage of Indian women. In its original form, the phrase suggests total defeat, the conquering of a nation, the death of a way of life. Throughout this book, the child protagonist, Nannie Little Rose, uses the phrase "my heart is on the ground" whenever she happens to feel sad or upset. This is a trivialization of the belief system of a people.

Lack of Historical Accuracy

A basic criterion of historical fiction is that facts about people who actually lived and events that actually happened must be accurate, or, at least, any deviations clearly spelled out. This is especially important in books for young readers. Factual errors abound here; they are on nearly every page.

• There was no such person as "Chief Sitting Bull of Cheyenne nation." (p. 14) His name was Tatanka Iotanka, whom the whites called Sitting Bull. He was a spiritual leader, not a chief; and he was Hunkpapa Lakota, not Cheyenne.

• American Horse was not a "chief of the Red Cloud Sioux." (p. 20) He was a cousin to Red Cloud.

• Spotted Tail did not take his band west to "be free." (p. 12) He left Whetstone Agency to get away from the alcohol that ran heavily there.

• The Cheyenne and Oglala "Sioux" were not the only ones to fight Custer. (p. 50) Hunkpapa and Arapaho were also part of the battle.

• The whites did not "give" the Lakota the Black Hills in a treaty (p. 12); by treaty, the people were able to retain a portion of what had been theirs for millennia. They are still fighting to keep it.

• In a diary entry, composed only six months after her arrival at Carlisle, Nannie Little Rose writes in perfect English, but transcribes Red Cloud's speech into her diary, using stilted language instead of Red Cloud's own flowing and eloquent words (pp. 103-104).

• Spotted Tail sent his sons to Carlisle because he knew it was going to be important for them to learn to speak, read and write English. He did not instruct his daughter, Red Road, to recruit children or to convince them to go.

Yet in this book Red Road says, "You must learn the white people's ways. To help our people. You will see great trees with red apples. You will ride on the iron horse. You will wear a school dress." (p. 27) As Hyde (1979) notes:

> *[B]efore he openly supported the plan and offered his sons as pupils, [he] stipulated that his daughter Red Road and her husband Charles Tackett should go with the children...and be paid a salary to act as their guardians.... [He] had the mentality to realize that these children, in far-away Pennsylvania, would be terribly frightened and unhappy if some adults of their own tribe were not there to protect and advise them.* (p. 278)

• When Spotted Tail visited Carlisle in 1880 and found his children, unhappy, in military uniform, drilling with rifles, he insisted that they return with him to Rosebud. In Rinaldi's rendition of this episode, Nannie writes: "We all knew Max and his three brothers did not wish to go, not even Paul. There was much screaming and crying. Red Road tried to calm her little brothers. Spotted Tail made them take off their citizens' clothing and put on their blanket clothing. He had to drag Max into the wagon." (p. 121) But according to historical accounts, the scene was just the opposite:

> *Spotted Tail [talked] in private with his sons and the other boys from Rosebud and found that most of them were miserable and homesick.... None of them had learned English or to read or write.* (p. 290)

> *[He] took all his children, apparently four sons, a grandson, a granddaughter, and another small boy he claimed as a close relative. He carried them off under guard of Sioux chiefs and headmen, daring Pratt to try and stop him. Pratt was too overwhelmed to attempt that. He had to guard the rest of his school, as there were indications that a general stampede for the train might take place. As it was, some of the heartbroken children who were being left at the school managed to steal away and hide themselves on the train.... At Harrisburg the train was searched again and a little Oglala girl (Red Dog's granddaughter) was found and dragged screaming back to captivity.* (Hyde, 1979, pp. 292-293)

• Rinaldi paints Pratt as a model of sweet reason, kind to the children, counseling them, talking with them about their futures: "Mr. Captain Pratt has been having private talks with every student in our class. He is making sure we are doing the right lessons for what we want to become." (p. 167) Again, written accounts paint a different picture:

> *It seems curious that church people, humanitarians, and idealists should fall so much in love with Pratt. He was a quite ordinary army officer who had developed a marked ability for knocking the spirit out of the Indians and turning them into docile students who would obey all orders. Pratt was a domineering man who knew only one method for dealing with anyone who opposed his will. He bullied them into submission.* (Hyde, 1979, p. 289)

• All of the references to loaning money or having access to money are inaccurate. (p. 122) Money was not available to the children, no matter how much they had earned. It would have been highly unlikely for Nannie to have given her brother money without the approval of the administration.

• Contrary to Rinaldi's statement in the historical note that "most of the graduates were able to earn a living away from the reservation," and "others went on to higher education," evidence points to the opposite. Earning a

living "away from the reservation" meant going into Indian service and working on a reservation or agency—or in one of the dozens of off-reservation boarding schools modeled after Carlisle. And very few children graduated. Of the total population of 10,000, only 758 students—or fewer than 10%— graduated. More students ran away than graduated—1,758 runaways are documented.

Lack of Cultural Authenticity

The events in *My Heart Is On the Ground* are not plausible. In 1880, a Lakota child of the protagonist's age would have been well-educated by her aunties and grandmothers in Lakota tradition and lore, and ways of seeing the world and behaving in right relation to it. She would probably have had younger children to care for as well as older sisters in her extended family, her tiospaye, to emulate.

• A Lakota child in 1880 would not have referred to herself as "Sioux." (beginning at p. 6) It is a French corruption of an enemy-name used by the Ojibwe. She would have referred to herself by her band (Sicangu) or location (Spotted Tail Agency) or from a much smaller familial group, her tiospaye. And she would certainly not have referred to Indian men as "braves."

• A Lakota child would not have been misinformed about her own people: "I come from a place called Dakota. My people belong to the Great Plains tribe." (p. 12) Nor would she have voiced stereotypes such as "Our men are very brave and honorable. Our women are noble." (p. 12) Nor would a Lakota child have used phrases such as "our men" and "our women"; she would probably have referred to people by their relationships, e.g., "our mothers" or "our grandfathers." Nor would she have used the French word "travois"—she would have used the Lakota word, or its English equivalent, pony-drag (p. 33).

• If this Lakota child had in fact been given a diary (which is highly unlikely at Carlisle in 1880), she would probably have been much more circumspect in her writing, because she would have known that words have power, even written words. And she would have known that she could be severely punished for speaking her thoughts.

• She would probably not have written about the wholesale slaughter of the buffalo, broken treaties, land theft, and "ann-u-itees" (p. 5 and throughout), nor would she have written disparagingly about the white people—including the teachers who would read this diary—who held the power of life and death over the children.

• And a Lakota child certainly would not indict her own people for the theft of the land—"our chiefs have made large mistake in giving over our lands." (p. 5 and throughout)

• Children who knew some English were used at Carlisle and other boarding schools to help control the other children. The respect they were taught at home for their elders was used against them in boarding school. They were not taught to be simple interpreters, or "Friends-To-Go-Between-Us" (p. 3 and throughout)—they were taught to be informants, and used as such.

• Children were severely punished for speaking their own languages. They were beaten, confined, forced to eat lye soap, and worse. Although they often would speak their own languages in secret, perhaps whispering after lights-out, they would not have engaged in such risky behavior in the dining room or in front of Pratt (p. 69)

• Children might certainly have made fun of their teachers in secret, giving them names like "Miss Chipmunk,"

but again, they would not write negatively about white adults (in a place where there was no privacy of any kind), "She is bad to the eye. Fat and ugly." (p. 13)

• On page 7, Nannie says, "The white people are very powerful. They know almost everything on the earth's surface and in the heavens also. So much to learn!" Here, the young reader is set up to believe that Lakota people had/have no scientific knowledge, no education system. By the age of 12, Nannie would have been educated by her elders in Lakota history, ways of the Earth, Stars, Thunders, Spirits, and healing plants. Although the wisdom of these things was passed down through the oral tradition, it does not diminish the wisdom of the people. To assume that, one week after arriving at Carlisle, Nannie would have negated all of her traditional teachings is unbelievable.

• After a week at Carlisle, Nannie says, "I think Missus Camp Bell (a teacher) would make a good Sioux woman." (p. 11) Does "Missus Camp Bell" know about traditional ways of being? How could she know how to care for a traditional Lakota family if she is not connected to the culture? Could she do quillwork, find food, skin animals, cure skins, prepare meat, make traditional clothing?

• Lakota children were taught to be deferential, cooperative, and respectful to their elders. A Lakota child would not have written about her mother, "My mother is jealous of Red Road because she is so young and pretty." (p. 11) Most plural marriages included sisters or cousins so that there was harmony in the family. Young girls learned quillwork from their mothers or aunties. Nannie would not have gone to Red Road's tipi to learn quillwork.

• On page 4, Nannie says, "I have been on no battles or hunts. Of what worth am I, a girl of twelve winters?" A young Lakota girl feeling worthless? One of the seven sacred ceremonies involves a girl's passage. At 12, she would have certainly known her importance to her own family and community as both a cherished child (wakanyela, sacred being) and a new young woman.

• Brothers and sisters have a special bond in Lakota society that was even more pronounced in this time period. They were taught to honor each other above all others, including spouses. That way, if there was a divorce, they could turn to their siblings for help. Given this bond, a Lakota girl would not criticize her brother this way: "He much time acts like a fool.... On the way here he made much trouble.... Whiteshield is always trouble" (pp. 9-10).

> • Moreover, Nannie would not have been shamed by her brother's doing a war dance in the yard: "You are no warrior.... A warrior does not shame his people." (p. 39) More than likely, she would have supported everything he did because he was being extremely brave in rebelling.
>
> • Nannie would not have considered her brother "spoiled" for having been honored for counting coup on a dead enemy at age 12. "Spoiled" is not a Lakota concept; the honoring of children is; and counting coup is counting coup, whether the enemy is dead or alive.
>
> • And, of course, Whiteshield would not have referred to his sister, or any girl, in a derogatory way, such as: "Only a stupid girl would say such a thing." (p. 39)

• When Whiteshield, in an act of open rebellion, does a war dance, this is how Nannie describes it: "There was a strange figure carrying a torch and doing a dance. He was wearing only a breechclout and moccasins. In his belt

he had a knife. Around and around he danced while he chanted a war song." (p. 37) This "strange figure" is her brother. He would be known to her and not be considered strange. If he were dancing a particular dance, she would name it and understand its significance. If he were singing, she would know the words and what the words meant. If all of their traditional clothing had been taken to be sold or destroyed as was the case at Carlisle, where did he get a breechcloth and moccasins? And where did he get a knife?

• "He hates baths," Nannie says of her brother (p. 16). Traditionally, Indian people bathed every day. This has been documented. Whiteshield may have disliked bathing at the school, in tubs, which would have been far less sanitary than bathing in a lake or stream; but this suggests that Indians didn't like bathing when in fact they bathed much more regularly than the newcomers.

• However, the rebellious Whiteshield finally does a brave deed, according to Nannie: He catches, and brings to the guardhouse, a "tramp" who crawled over the school wall, entered the grounds, and stole some wood (p. 82). For children who are raised to be generous above all things, it is highly unlikely that they would participate in capturing a poor homeless person. And, in any event, it would certainly not be seen as an act of bravery.

• Nannie's father would not have asked her to do an act that would have been her brother's responsibility: "Then he says I must study and work and obey, and do one act of bravery.... I must bring him honor with this act. I ask him if he would also ask one act of bravery from my brother.... [H]e shakes his head and says...my brother is older, but I am wiser." (p. 30) It just would not have happened that way. Men and women have different roles in Lakota society; they are not subordinate, they are just different.

• Nor would her father have ever suggested that she take on a vision quest (p. 30). This was and is a male activity. Women experience moontime (menstruation) and special ceremonies and practices to acknowledge them.

• On page 31, Nannie says, "My grandmother...has powerful medicine. She has visions. She tells them to the shaman, our holy man, who explains it to our people." (p. 31) If a child's grandmother indeed had visions, she might or might not share them with a spiritual leader. But visions are a private thing; they wouldn't be "explained" to anyone. And "shaman" is not an Indian term.

• Nannie would not have said, written, or thought: "I think sometimes that Pretty Eagle is going to be a shaman, even though she is a girl." (p. 33) Pretty Eagle is a child, and only post-menopausal women can attain the status of spiritual leader.

• Later, Rinaldi has Nannie's grandma teaching Pretty Eagle to go into trances, which she practices, and sending her on a vision quest, where her "spirit helper" tells her to come to Carlisle and "show the children it is not wrong to be here..." (pp. 75-76). This passage suggests a Native spiritual affirmation of the mistreatment of Indian children at Carlisle.

• On page 40, Nannie says, "We learned about the Devil in Sunday school. I think he is like some of our medicine men. He can change his shape if he wishes." (p. 40) To compare a respected and loved spiritual leader to the foreign Christian concept of "devil" is not something a Lakota child, steeped in Lakota cosmology, would do. More likely, she would compare the "devil" to an evil spirit.

• On page 32, Nannie's mother asks, "What will you learn? To be more silly than you are?" Lakota children were, and are, treated with more respect than that. The Lakota did not/do not talk down to their children.

• On page 33, Nannie says to Pretty Eagle, "We will gather all the wildflowers on the plains and put them in front of every tipi." This is not something that Lakota children would do. This would be considered wasteful and overlays a European perspective on Lakota daily life.

• On page 58, Nannie is fasting "to find her spirit helper," something she, as a young woman, would not have done. When the doctor orders her to eat, she does, with gusto, then feels guilty: "I had two pieces [of chocolate cake]. How can I ever be pure enough to find my spirit helper when I love choc-o-late cake so?" This reflects an overlay of European-style guilt upon Lakota belief and ritual. Lakota children would have preferred a big bowl of soup, some fry bread and, for "dessert," a bowl of wojapi instead of chocolate.

• Nannie Little Rose describes Sun Dance, the most sacred ceremony of the Lakota people, this way: "Part of me is missing. I feel like a young warrior in our Sun Dance, who has had the skin near his breasts cut and sticks put in the openings. The sticks are fastened to two ropes and I am left hanging, to show my bravery." (p. 29) This is an exoticized description that reflects a lack of understanding of Sun Dance, which is a thank-offering for the good of the community. In Sun Dance,

> "participants offer Wakantanka the greatest gift they have, their flesh and blood.... The dancers move in a circle around and around and around. The circle represents our universe.... As the participants dance, they pray hard for their personal prayers and the prayers of the entire Lakota nation. Family members and friends stay nearby to offer their support and send their own prayers to Wakantanka." (Rose, 1999, pp. 34-35)

Moreover, a Lakota child in 1880 would not likely think about talking to strangers about (or writing about) Sun Dance in any way, nor would she obsess over it or dream about it (pp. 123, 127, 131).

• And a young woman in art class would not be drawing pictures of Sun Dance, as Red Road does (p. 60). She just wouldn't.

• Later in the diary (p. 44), Nannie Little Rose says, "Today we buried Horace Watchful Fox. The ground was hard and cold. I know some of the boys and girls wanted to tear their garments, cut their hair, cover themselves with mud, and slash at their arms because the Death Angel took Horace. But we were made to stand in citizens' clothing, clean and quiet." This is more a description of Rinaldi's fantasy than it is of a Lakota grieving ceremony. Moreover, it is unlikely that children of other nations would participate in a Lakota ritual, nor would children of that time period have engaged in the same kind of grieving ceremony as adults.

• And Indian children would not be gathering evergreen and berries to make funeral wreaths (p. 43) unless they had been forced to by school officials.

• The passage where Nannie describes her father shows a lack of understanding of the clothing traditional people wore: "He is wearing his chief's garments. A shirt with fringe and beaded bands on the shoulders and sleeves. Also his chief's leggings with beads, his bear claw necklace, and his braids are wrapped in otter tails. On his head is a stick headdress. I know he wears it to show the white people who we are. But no other men on the reservation wear their chief's clothing. I think my father wishes to be what he once was, maybe so." (pp. 29-30) Tribal leaders did not dress in headdress and regalia every day and every moment. And none of us can even guess as to what a "stick headdress" might be.

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• A Lakota child would not have been able to give away the possessions of a friend who has just died (p. 147). At home, it would have been the parents' responsibility; and here, at Carlisle, everything would have been taken away from the children anyway.

• The characterization of Belle Rain Water is also confusing. Hopi children were, and are, taught to be quiet, respectful people. Hopi children in the foreign culture of a boarding school would be even more likely to keep to themselves or to try to seek out their relatives, rather than openly engage in conversation, not to mention arguments, with people outside their culture. For a Hopi child to be so belligerent and aggressive just does not fit with how her society would have raised her.

• Later, Belle Rain Water, in apology, gives Nannie a prayer stick. A Hopi child would not have given a "prayer stick" to a Lakota child. (p. 145) First of all, sacred objects like these were/are not things children have or share, especially intertribally. Second (see above comment), all the children's things were taken away from them; they were not permitted to own anything of a cultural/spiritual nature. And finally, where would Belle Rain Water have gotten an eagle feather?

• Wealth is not, and never has been, measured by the number of poles in a tipi! (p. 41) Wealth was measured by how much one gave away, not by how much one collected.

• Among the Plains peoples, kinnikinnic ("kin-ni-kin-nic") is not tobacco. It is willowbark shavings often mixed with tobacco (p. 15).

• Lakota people did not grow corn and wheat in 1880 (p. 62).

Stereotypes

A basic criterion of good children's literature is that it be free of stereotypes, but stereotypes abound in children's books about American Indian peoples. They are usually found in descriptive passages about Native characters. A few authors like Rinaldi take this one step further, by placing stereotypical language and images in an Indian child protagonist's own words.

Stereotypical Language

Throughout, Rinaldi uses stereotyped language to express Lakota (or "Indian") speech and thought patterns. These include over-emphasis on compound words (e.g., "Friend-To-Go-Between-Us," "Time-That-Was-Before," "night-middle-made") to "sound Indian," when there is no basis for such use. For instance, Rinaldi makes up the term "Friend-To-Go-Between-Us" as Nannie's word for "interpreter." Yet there is a Lakota word for "interpreter": iyeska, literally, one who speaks well. The original term meant "translator," since most translators at the time were the mixed-blood children of Indian women and white traders. Hanco'kan is the Lakota word for midnight.

Rinaldi also uses romantic-sounding metaphors throughout the book: "[T]he path between my mother and me is filled with rocks" (p. 27), "The council fire burns bright" (p. 21), [H]is spring is poisoned with anger" (p. 49), and, of course, the ever-present "My heart is on the ground." A favorite among us is this multi-metaphor: "And her words are not empty gourds, with nothing inside to quench our need, but full of meaning, from which I drink hope." (p. 29)

Throughout, Nannie romantically obsesses over the concepts "bravery," "honor," and "nobleness." Nannie also repeatedly uses the term "blanket Indians" as descriptive, rather than as a derogatory term used by whites at the time, to refer to traditional people.

As well, Nannie Little Rose speaks and writes in the stilted speech pattern we call "early jawbreaker" at the beginning of the book ("My teacher, Missus Camp Bell, say I must write in this book each day. She calls it die-eerie. It is the white man's talking leaves. But they talk not yet.... Teacher tells it that I know some English, that she is much proud of me, but wants be more proud."). (p. 3) Yet, in only ten months, Nannie is speaking and writing perfect, if not eloquent English, except for when she "lapses" back into "Indian" thought-patterns.

Stereotypical Nobility

Throughout, Nannie "explains" Lakota belief and ritual to the child reader, a transparent literary device we find annoying. As well, these "beliefs" are wrong. Besides the Sun Dance and mourning ritual, discussed above, there are many examples of this.

• "With my people we believe that all things have a spirit. A war club has a spirit. A prairie dog has two spirits." (p. 81) This is a gross oversimplification of the belief that everything has life and purpose.

• "In order to be brave I must have a spirit helper." (pp. 30-31) This obsession with bravery and "spirit helpers" runs throughout the book, and, again, is a gross oversimplification of the value of courage.

Nannie is obsessed with doing "a brave deed to bring honor to my people." This is practically the only thing she thinks about. At the end of the book, young readers are left to believe that her "brave deed" is to play the part of a pilgrim in the school's Thanksgiving play. In the scene which is supposed to show her victory, this little girl has successfully made the transition from Indian to white—she has become a clear victim of colonialism.

Stereotypical Treatment of Girls and Women

Derogatory references to girls and women abound in this book. Besides coming from Nannie herself (e.g., "Of what worth am I, a girl of twelve winters?"—p. 4), most of these references are mouthed by her brother, Charles Whiteshield ("only a stupid girl would say such a thing—p. 39, "women's dreams are worth nothing"—p. 67, "he says I am not a warrior, just a girl"—p. 105). This is not, and never has been, a Lakota way of expression; and is the opposite of honored brother-sister relationships (see above).

As well, traditional Lakota girls and women were not obsessed with appearance. That is not meant to say that they did not dress well. But concepts such as "fat and ugly" (p. 13) and "young and pretty" (p. 11) are not Lakota concepts.

Long hair had, and has, great significance for Lakota people. Traditionally, hair was/is cut only at a time of mourning. At Carlisle, children's braids were lopped off to frighten and subdue them, to "cut them off" from their people. When Pretty Eagle gets her hair cut, Nannie says, "Pretty Eagle is very frightened. I held her hand while they cut her hair. When it was cropped short, Pretty Eagle shook her head and only she laughed. "It feels so light," she said. "I think I will like it." (p. 71) This is not how Lakota children experienced this awful first assault. Often, they screamed and cried, and would be beaten for it.

In describing the practice of Lakota courtship, Nannie says, "If I came of age to wed before our ways were done, the man, he puts on his best robe and walk by our tipi. Then he come closer and grab of me. I would struggle, but he would win. If I like him I bring him water and ask him to come another time...." (pp. 5-6) This description is a mixture of TV-caveman ritual and fantasy. In any event, it is nothing like traditional Lakota courtship. By the age of 12, Nannie would probably have received traditional womanhood instruction from her elders in addition to having witnessed the courting process (and perhaps giggled about it many times with her girlfriends).

A BRIEF DIGRESSION ABOUT LUCY PRETTY EAGLE AND COLONIALISM

We don't know very much about Lucy Pretty Eagle. We know that her Lakota name was Take the Tail, that she was the daughter of Pretty Eagle, that she came to Carlisle from the Rosebud Agency at age ten on March 9, 1884, and that she died four months later. Hers is the first gravestone in the Carlisle cemetery.

According to the author's note, "Some research indicates that Lucy may not have been dead when she was buried. She could have been in a self-induced trance, to try to appeal to spiritual powers for any number of reasons." (p. 180) So Rinaldi has taken a well-known ghost story that has been circulating around Carlisle for several decades, embellished it further with her own interpretation of Lakota cosmology, and crafted a children's book around this "event."

Whether Rinaldi did this unconsciously or not, an Indian girl being buried alive is a gruesome metaphor for colonization and the spiritual, cultural and psychic suffocation and trauma Indian children suffered at Carlisle and other boarding schools.

But this is much more than a metaphor: Nannie Little Rose, Lucy's friend, knew about the trance-like states and blames herself for not being able to tell the white people in charge that Lucy wasn't really dead. Here we have Indian children responsible for the death of Indian children—after all, the white people had just made an "honest mistake." And the story, crafted this way, allows both Rinaldi and the non-Native reader to avoid the issues and erase the real reasons that many, many children died at the boarding schools: malnutrition, tuberculosis, pneumonia, smallpox, physical abuse (including sexual abuse), and—no less importantly—broken hearts and spirits, and loneliness.

Moreover, the "trance-mistaken-for-death" scenario that Rinaldi uses here again perpetuates the stereotype that Indians died or were decimated because they were Indians: unable to adapt, unwilling to change, and—worst of all—physically and emotionally different from white people. A possible translation of this scene: Lucy is killed, not by the tragic boarding school experience, not by the loss of parents and homeland, not by inadequate diet or disease—but by her own "Indianness." In other words, Indian people have only themselves to blame for their own demise. They just couldn't become civilized—it was inherently, genetically impossible.

It is entirely possible that Rinaldi may not even be conscious of what she's done. Such stereotypical colonialist attitudes as expressed in this book may be so embedded in the American psyche that we often miss it even at its most blatant. We call this to the non-Native reader's attention because it is easy to miss otherwise, this attitude that colonization is "meant to be" or "inevitable." It is neither.

A BRIEF DIGRESSION ABOUT PERSPECTIVE

In many ways, *My Heart Is On the Ground* reflects what can go wrong when a non-Native author writes about Native cultures. One of the more controversial questions in literature is who should be writing books that include characters or themes related to members of a particular ethnic, racial, or religious group. Those who prefer that such books be written from within communities perhaps justifiably fear exploitation, misrepresentation, or having their voices pre-empted. However, some non-Indians have written quality books about Native peoples, histories, and cultures, so it won't be argued here that only Native authors can write Native-themed stories.

While many fine books are written by authors outside of a community who do their homework, the voice of an insider still offers a unique perspective that is in many ways a rare gift to young readers. We sometimes see stories from those who have married Native people, borne Native children, been adopted into Native families, or known Native people who called them "friend." Even more directly, we sometimes see stories by Native people, stories that have been passed down or reshaped to reflect family and personal histories.

Indeed, books written by Native authors do not usually contain conventions that are typically used to signal the book as being about a Native character. For example, characters in books written by Native authors don't speak in guttural English. They don't act like savages and they don't seem like mystical creatures. Rather, they are often eloquent speakers. But this eloquence may not fit the non-Native reader's (or publisher's) expectations of how Natives speak, so they may reject the book as not being "authentic enough."

But on more subtle grounds, Indian writers have to do their research as well. A story from one's great uncle may actually be more authentic than anything written by someone with a Ph.D. in anthropology. A childhood experience may lend itself to a scene, even a whole story. Not everything crafted by Native writers will necessarily present the most popular or desirable or comfortable picture, even within their communities, certainly to the mainstream. Although each story will have the individual storyteller's own vision and voice, they are all taking care to fulfill their responsibility.

An outside researcher, however careful, who goes on to write a story based entirely on written words—especially the words of another outsider—rather than experiences may craft a book that few would hesitate to share with children. However, these authors may unknowingly mimic misconceptions or stereotypes inherent in the research material, and still others may "whitewash" history to make the non-Native audience more comfortable with issues like stolen land and forced assimilation.

Indian voices are grossly underrepresented in books with Native characters and themes. It is common that African-American literature classes or book lists feature a number of books by African-American authors and illustrators. It is common that Asian-American and Latino literature classes and book lists feature a number of books by Asian Americans and Latinos. It is also common that Native-American literature classes and book lists often fail to feature a single title by any person with any sort of tie to a Native community. The proportional disparity is staggering. A child could read literally hundreds of books with Native characters and not one by anyone who had ever so much as shaken hands with a real live Indian.

FINAL COMMENTS

Despite all the documented horrors of the "noble experiment" that was Carlisle, *My Heart Is On the Ground* casts the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in a positive light as though it were a good thing. Rinaldi even says in her author's notes, "Those first Sioux children who came to Carlisle could not have been happy there. But it was their only chance for a future." (p. 177)

The legacy of Carlisle and the other Indian boarding schools—this "future"—is a legacy of hopelessness and despair, of alcoholism and other substance abuse, suicide, dysfunctional parenting; an open, gaping century-long wound that will take many more years for the Indian communities all over the U.S. and Canada to heal.

Yet, the only "bad" characters in this book are Indian people—Belle Rain Water, a jealous, spiteful Hopi child, who eventually comes around to seeing the error of her ways; Charles Whiteshield (Nannie's brother), a "renegade" who "acts like a fool" and makes "much trouble," and whose behavior "shames" Nannie, until he eventually comes around to seeing the error of his ways; Goodbird (Nannie's mother), who is jealous and spiteful; White Thunder (Nannie's father), who ignorantly tries to maintain the old ways; and Spotted Tail, who takes his children back, even though they don't want to go home.

Nowhere in this book is to be found the screaming children, thrown onto horse-drawn wagons, being taken away from their homes. Nowhere is to be found the desperately lonely children, heartbroken, sobbing into the night. Nowhere is to be found the terrified children, stripped naked and beaten, for trying to communicate with each other and not understanding what was expected of them. Nowhere is to be found the unrelenting daily humiliation, in word and deed, from the teachers, matrons and staff. Nowhere is to be found the desperate runaways, lost, frozen in the snow. Nowhere to be found is the spirit of resistance. Nowhere.

Resistance among the Indian students was deep, subtle, long-lasting and valiantly carried on for as long as boarding schools existed. Besides running away, this resistance took many forms—physical, spiritual, intellectual. Children destroyed property and set fires. They refused to speak English. They subverted teachers' and matrons' orders whenever they could. But except for Charles Whiteshield's "war dance," which is presented as a shameful thing, that resistance—and the courage it represents—receives no attention in this book. As in Francis LaFlesche's *The Middle Five* and Basil H. Johnston's *Indian School Days*, an Indian author would have made this resistance a central part of such as story.

To those who would argue that "it is possible" that a Native child might have had Nannie Little Rose's experiences, the overwhelming body of evidence—written and oral—suggests otherwise. The premise of this book—that a Native child would come in and, within a period of ten months, move from someone who reads and writes limited English and has a totally Indian world view to someone who is totally fluent in a language that is foreign to her and totally assimilated to a foreign culture—and be better for the experience—is highly unlikely. Brainwashing did not come readily. Brainwashing took time.

Given the marketing and distribution forces behind *My Heart Is On the Ground*, we know that it will probably be more widely read than any other book about the boarding school experience. The book adds to the great body of misinformation about Native life and struggle in the United States and Canada. This one book epitomizes the utter lack of sensitivity and respect that has come to characterize the vast majority of children's books about Native Americans. Non-Native readers of *My Heart Is On the Ground* will continue to be validated in whatever feelings of superiority they may have; Native children will continue to be humiliated.

Rinaldi goes on to say in the author's note that "I am sure that in whatever Happy Hunting Ground they now reside, they will forgive this artistic license, and even smile upon it." (p. 196) This is the epitome of white fantasy: that Indian people will forgive and even smile upon white people, no matter the atrocities—past and present.

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